HARAMBEE FLAME

VOL. II No. 2 July 1981

RENEWAL

In the previous issue of the FLAME, the point was made that there is "no N in Africa," with the meaning that we Black folk in the U.S. are Africans who happen to have been born in the U.S., that our history and heritage go back to Africa, and that we must seek to be who we really are instead of inventions of a system of White racism ---"niggers."

You were asked to consider the implications of racial self-hatred and to help us in a campaign to seek eradication of the many manifestations of this self-hatred. You were asked to take certain measures. The list of those measures continues here.

American-born African parents must take steps to attempt to exercise control over the forces that mold the attitudes of their children. Specifically, we must:

-take care that our children's television-viewing is carefully monitored in order to minimize the negative forces streaming out of the Nonsense Box into the heads of our children

-begin exposing our children at an early age to their African heritage and values through literature on African history, phonograph records of traditional African music, etc.

-begin exposing our children to that non-commercial music of the African-in-America tradition--blues, jazz, etc.(It is truly absurd that American-born African teenagers can effortlessly recite the generally meaningless or culturally backward lyrics of popular disco or "soul" tunes and have no knowledge whatsoever of artists such as John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Bessie Smith, et al.)

-take an active interest in what our children are learning in school and take pains to supplement their public school miseducation, seeking the knowledge of learned neighbors when you do not have the necessary information yourself.

American-born preachers must take time out from preaching to study history so they can release themselves from the fraud of a European-looking Jesus. Do they not know that, if they teach that Jesus is God(There is no place in scripture where Jesus claimed to be God.), people will identify the color of this Jesus with divinity and superiority? Have they not considered the impact such an identification can have on a non-white people who both must live under a system of White privilege and pray to a "White God"?

American-born African preachers must become forces for radical(to the root) change and spiritual renewal instead of continuing to be, for the most part, apologists for the status quo. We do have a small minority of ministers who work from a theology of liberation but need many more.

American-born African adults must substantially increase the numbers of us who are registered to vote, must vote on the basis of understanding of issues and candidates and vote in our collective interests. We must leave the ranks of the Democratic and Republican parties because both parties function to perpetuate politics-as-usual.

RENEWAL(continued)

There are many more steps that we must take in order to move significantly toward liberation; and to take only the steps listed here will be to take very big steps. But we must move forward because to stay where we are or to move backwards(as is happening in many of our communities) is dangerous.

-David L. Rice, editor

FROM OTHER SOURCES

National Black Independent Political Party---"...We realize Black people will never have power in L.A., U.S.A., until Black people organize for political empowerment. The NBIPP is committed to help in the liberation of Black people. The Democratic and Republican parties do not serve the interests of Black liberation. In fact, they serve the interests of Black oppression....So much of the anger that we Black Americans feel has been internalized. So many of us turn on each other instead of capitalism, the real enemy. Thus, in 1981, we are a divided people.... We're committed to building the NBIPP. This party must be mass-based, community-based from the bottom up not from the top down. For its success, you and I must become involved....The future and destiny of our people is not in the hands of Ronnie Reagan--the destiny of Black people is in the hands of Black people..."---from a recent address in Los Angeles by Ben Chavis, excerpted from THE MILITANT

Black Manhood in the 1970's---"While crime is obviously a function of poverty and racism, it is also-we must repeat-a function of gender. Black women are often in equally(as Black men) dire economic straits but continue to represent less than five percent of all Black criminals....Still, it is the street wise male oriented system that channels many black men into crime.... The violence accompanying those acts are another reflection of black macho.

. . . . . .
. THIS IS THE FINAL FREE ISSUE OF THE .
. FLAME FOR THOSE OF YOU OUTSIDE THE .
. PRISON. SEE ATTACHED FORM. .
. . . . . .
.....
.....

And it is partially the violence, representing a threat to personal safety, that causes society to punish street criminals more harshly than white collar criminals....(Some black men)have taken their gender guide from the movies and television's depiction of black men. They have taken on a role model that can be characterized as the carefree, hustling superstud caricature. It is what we call the pimp syndrome where women are viewed as objects of exploitation--sexual and economic.----from an article by Robert Staples in the current issue of THE BLACK SCHOLAR. Emphasis added.

. . . . . .
. Soon to come, the H.A.C.O. Thought .
. Buttons! .
. . . . . .

SEEDPAPER SEEKING SUBMISSIONS

SEEDPAPER: A PEOPLE'S ARCHIVE is a monthly publication containing the previously unpublished articles of persons addressing issues of importance to American-born Africans. The publication offers no payment but does provide unpublished writers with an opportunity to have their ideas exposed to other people. Send submissions to:

Ed Powell, Editor
124 Jewett Parkway
Buffalo, N.Y. 14214.

. . . . . .
. Brother, next time you catch yourself .
. referring to our women as "bitches," .
. consider this: YOUR MOTHER IS A WOMAN. .
. . . . . .

PRISON IS A PLACE...

(What is prison like? It's not the same for everyone. The prison I know is different from the prison you know.)

...Where all the "fish" look like All-American college boys
And you're surprised and later disgusted because people on the outside still have the same prejudices about prisoners that you used to have.

...Where you write letters and can't think of anything to say
Where you gradually write fewer and fewer letters and finally stop writing altogether.

...Where hope springs eternal
Where each parole board appearance means a chance to get out even if the odds are hopelessly against you.

...Where the flame in every man burns low
For some it goes out
But for most it flickers weakly
Sometimes flashes brightly
but never seems to burn as bright as it once did.

...Where you find grey hairs in your head or where you find that your hair is starting to disappear
Where you get false teeth
stronger glasses
and aches and pains you never felt before
Where you grow old and worry about it.

...Where you learn that nobody needs you and that the outside world goes on without you.

...Where you hear about a friend's divorce and didn't even know he was married
Where you hear about your neighbor's kids graduating from school and you thought they hadn't started yet.

L
I
F
E

R
H
Y
T
H
M
S

...Where you feel sorry for yourself
then get disgusted with yourself for feeling sorry for yourself
then get mad for feeling disgusted
and then convince yourself that you've changed the subject.

...Where you're smarter than the parole board because you know which guys will go straight
and which ones won't
You're wrong just as often
but you never admit it
and neither do they.

...Where you see men you do not admire and you wonder if you are like them
Where you strive to remain civilized but where you lose ground and know it.

...Where if you're married
you watch your marriage die
Where you learn that absence does not make the heart grow fonder
and where you stop blaming your wife for wanting a real live man instead of the fading memory of one.

...Where you wait for a promised visit
When it doesn't come you worry about a car accident
Then you find out the reason
You're glad it wasn't serious
and disappointed
because such a little thing could keep them from coming to see you.

...Where you go to bed before you're tired and pull the blanket over your head when you're not cold
Where you escape...
by reading
playing dominoes
playing cards
by dreaming or
by going mad.

...Where you fool yourself
Promise yourself you'll live a better life when you get out
Sometimes you do but more often you don't.

...Where you hate through clenched teeth
want to beat, kick, and scratch
and you wonder if the psychologists
know what they're talking about when
they say you actually hate yourself.

...Where you get out some day
When you do you wonder
how everyone else can be so calm
when you're so excited
when the bus driver goes over
twenty-five miles per hour and you
want to tell him to slow down but
you don't because
you know it's foolish.

-Maurice J. Sowell

IN MEMORY OF A RUNNY NOSE

Brown is my complexion
and the wrong hue
for down here
under your America-----

The pain of my existence burns
like acid
in the twenty-five feet
of my methadonized intestines.

ROLAIDS
does not
spell RELIEF.

-Robert Thomas

IN THE WINDOW

i could not taste thunder
for the sound of it was too bitter
i could not bear to part my lips
far enough to let in
the sound
for fear it would
too severely coat my tongue
and i would not be able to dance
with such a taste to stunt my pace

i am not a mannequin in
a store window
pretending to body english
as people marvel at my stillness
their language and mine are
not the same

LIFE RHYTHMS

even though a brick flies through
the glass
and i seem to have come to life
all the time i was living
and "thunder" was not my name
you were so stormy as to shun me
thinking thunder and clouds the same.

ROSES

roses sing to break the film
the membrane
the stubborn plate to hold
back happy tears
from rising from the ground
to meet the sky
the roses sing but now a thorny song
not so fierce to pierce
the bloody cloth of times so long
and hard
we could not gather words to
make our kids an entire song
but roses grow
their stems stretch high
and petals flare like nostrils
to whiff strong
on winds of change.

-David L. Rice

. . . . . .
. You are encouraged to submit your .
. poems, short stories, or expres- .
. sions that lie somewhere in between. .
. Send submissions to: .
. .
. David L. Rice/Editor .
. HARAMBEE FLAME .
. P.O. Box 2500 .
. Lincoln, Neb. .
. 68502 .